

EPI Update for Friday, June 11, 2010
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Preventing *Clostridium perfringens* contamination of food**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Preventing *Clostridium perfringens* contamination of food

Clostridium perfringens is a gram negative bacteria capable of forming spores which thrive in high protein foods such as meat and meat products. Although the vegetative cells are killed in foods cooked to 140°F, spores can survive these temperatures. These dormant spores can germinate into harmful cells if the cooked food is allowed to stand at temperatures between 41°F - 135°F.

Ingesting food contaminated with *Clostridium perfringens* results in gastroenteritis which typically occurs six to 24 hours after ingestion. Symptoms usually resolve within 24 hours. In severe cases, dehydration and other complications can occur.

As you are preparing and serving foods at your summer parties, the following precautions should be taken to prevent *Clostridium perfringens* contamination:

- Cook all foods to appropriate internal temperatures (145°F for beef or pork steaks and roasts, 155°F for ground or shredded beef or pork, and 165°F for all poultry)
- Cool foods quickly to less than 41°F; large containers of food cool slowly and may need to be split into smaller containers with a food height of no more than four inches to cool faster
- Reheat leftovers to a preferred temperature of 167°F
- Hold and serve foods at 140°F or higher

For additional information visit:

www.idph.state.ia.us/idph_universalhelp/main.aspx?system=IdphEpiManual&context=Clostridiumperfringens_factsheet

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

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